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REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 9 November 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the statement issued by the Federal Ministry of Justice of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning an alleged refusal by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to issue visas to officials of the International Tribunal in The Hague (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 48, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Statement issued by the Federal Ministry of Justice of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Some media in Yugoslavia and abroad carried the news that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, Louise Arbour, and the President of the Tribunal, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, will not come to Belgrade to attend a symposium on the Tribunal because, it is alleged, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has not issued them entry visas.

This information is inaccurate. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in The Hague did issue to the President of the Tribunal, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, the Prosecutor of the Tribunal, Louise Arbour, and the Deputy Prosecutor, Graham Blewitt, as well as to their nine associates, the visas to participate in the said symposium.

It is a matter of the discretion of these ladies and gentlemen whether they will use the approved visas or not and what public statements they will make, but they cannot claim that they have not been given Yugoslav visas.

As far as cooperation with The Hague Tribunal is concerned, the official Yugoslav positions have been presented in the letter of the Federal Minister of Justice, Zoran Knezevic, to the Prosecutor of the Tribunal, Louise Arbour, and they are of a principled nature, since what is involved in Kosovo and Metohija is the legitimate right and activity of the State to suppress terrorism and not a war conflict.